



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2007

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PASTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLING TRIBAL FUNDS

PHOENIX – Sheila Isabell, 53, of Chillicothe, Ohio, pleaded guilty to Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations, in federal district court in Phoenix.

Sheila Isabell had been charged with one count of Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations. Between April 1 and May 2, 2001, Isabell stole approximately \$96,253 belonging to the Gila River Indian Tribe and the Siloam Indian Baptist Church. Isabell, as pastor of the church, had applied to the Gila River Indian Tribe for a grant to construct a community building for the Gila River Indian Tribe. After the tribe issued a check to the Church in the amount of \$122,946 for the community building, Isabell and her husband, Timothy Isabell, withdrew funds from the church's bank account and used the funds for personal expenditures.

Timothy Isabell was also indicted for Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations, entered a guilty plea to the charge and was sentenced in federal district court in Phoenix on September 25, 2006. Timothy Isabell was sentenced to three months imprisonment and three months home detention and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$96,253.19.

A conviction for Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations carries a maximum penalty of 5 years, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Mary Murguia will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Murguia on April 16, 2007.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Gila River Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by John R. Lopez IV and John J. Tuchi, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-1082-PHX-MHM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-055(Isabell)

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